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*Baptist Record
will not publish
next week*

Due to postal regulations that limit The Baptist Record to 50 issues per year, the newspaper will not publish on July 7. The next issue of The Baptist Record will be dated July 14.

All news and information to be included in the issue of July 14 should be in the offices of The Baptist Record by the close of business on July 7.

The staff of The Baptist Record thanks you for your support and wishes for everyone a happy observance of Independence Day on July 4.

SBC speakers urge unity through CP

PHOENIX (BP) — A pastor, a seminary student, and the president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee delivered a challenge for renewed commitment to unified ministry through the SBC's Cooperative Program (CP) during the 2011 SBC annual meeting June 14-15 in Phoenix, Az.

The pastor and seminary student were part of the Executive Committee report to messengers attending the annual meeting, in which Executive Committee President Frank Page urged Southern Baptist churches to magnify their impact nationally and internationally by even a one percent of budget increase in support for CP.

Kevin White, pastor of First Church in Longview, Wa., thanked Southern Baptists "for giving so sacrificially so that my family might know Jesus Christ. I am the product of your sacrifice and your giving to the Cooperative Program."

White was four years old, living in a mining town of 80 people in northern Nevada, when a CP-funded missionary began visiting and repeatedly witnessing to White's father. The missionary "never gave up... and through his devotion, my family came to Jesus Christ," White said.

"I watched a radical change in my father," who five years later was pastor of a church the missionary planted in the remote town and went on to plant several other churches, primarily among Native Americans, during the next 35 years, he said.

White himself also became a church planter, as will his son, a recent seminary graduate, who will soon engage in church planting among an unreached people group overseas. "Three generations so far because you gave. Thank you, thank you from the bottom of my heart," White said tearfully, his voice cracking.

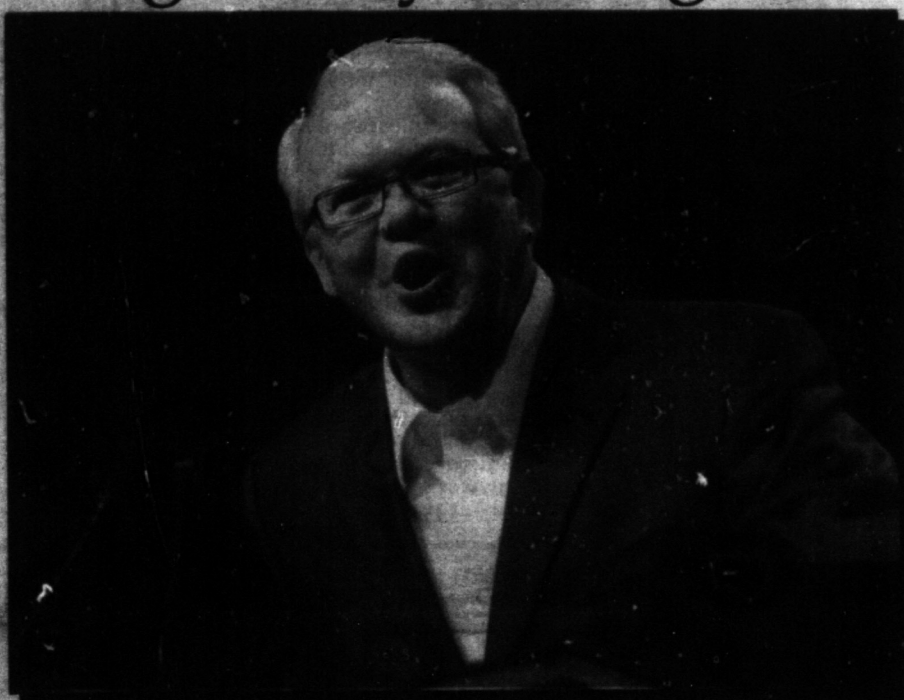
Quincy Jones, a student at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, said: "Is our vision of the Cooperative Program the Lord's vision? ...Could the Cooperative Program actually be about more than numbers and dollars [and] actually be about a special stewardship from God given to Southern Baptists?"

The questions, part of an initiative started at Southwestern by Jones, should "stimulate a greater awareness and appreciation for the unprecedented resources and impact Southern Baptists have through this incredible mechanism for ministry called the Cooperative Program," he said.

The initiative's goal is "to burn the historic vision of the CP upon the hearts and minds of students in such a way that we graduate with a real commitment to continue this extraordinary stewardship of the Gospel given to Southern Baptists by God," the father of five added.

Jones said he and his wife Rhonda, who was standing next to him, came from an independent church background and thus have to appreciate the value of cooperative missions. "We look around us, and we get it," Jones said.

"We have caught the vision, and we want to help promote that vision so the



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT — Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, gives the Executive Committee report during the morning session on June 14 at the 2011 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Az. Page asked messengers to lead their churches to consider a one percent of budget increase to Southern Baptists' unified giving plan. (BP photo)

impact of the SBC will continue and be even greater for the sake of the Gospel as we press ahead into the 21st century. So we thank you, Southern Baptists, for the investment in our lives and in the lives of countless others through your commitment to this incomparable stewardship of the Gospel that we call the Cooperative Program," Jones said.

Page echoed that sentiment on behalf of all the annual meeting messengers on June 14. "I know all of you could stand here, and in some way or another share the impact of the Cooperative Program upon your life," Page said. "I certainly can as well. What we do together, we do to the glory of God and He is using cooperative ministry, unified ministry, in a mighty way across this land. Let's not forget that."

Despite the level of unified ministry underway, Page said the SBC has "been headed in the wrong direction, in several ways. Our convention is fracturing into various groups, some theological, most methodological. I believe our unity affects our evangelism and it's time to come together in a principle of unified ministry."

"It is natural to have an individualistic mindset and in the 21st century, that has reached epic proportions. Everyone thinks they can do best what they do by themselves. Some of our churches have adopted a fortress mentality. That is sad," Page said.

"We need to recommit to a principle of unified ministry. To accomplish this and

to do better at what we're doing together, we're asking you... and we're challenging you, would you please do more than you've done before?"

"Our Cooperative Program ministries have decreased every year for many years. We challenge you; we encourage you to raise your Cooperative Program support. Would you do that? One percent next year. We have churches that have already said, 'We will be a part of this. We will join in raising our Cooperative Program support by one percent next year.'"

Page introduced a video showing that a one percent of budget increase in Cooperative Program giving from all SBC churches would add \$100 million to the Cooperative Program.

This would allow hundreds of churches to be planted across the United States, Page said. Internationally, 380 missionaries could be commissioned to begin reaching the 3,800 unengaged people groups worldwide. A one percent increase could boost seminary student enrollment by 16,000 students, Page said.

"I'm excited that almost all of our state executive directors have made a promise to move their states to giving more to reach the lost in the world as well as in their own states," Page said. "Hear it and hear it well. We need a revival of total mission support, including a renewed commitment to unified ministry through the Cooperative Program."

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

EDITOR
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN
Benjamin Ivey
bivey@mbcb.org

ADVERTISING
Emily Jones
ejones@mbcb.org

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

EDITOR EMERITUS
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Archie Herrin, Columbia
Chris Webb, Jackson
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Postmaster:
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Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

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address changes to: The Editor,
BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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Homosexual agenda keeps rolling

On Friday evening of last week, New York became the sixth state to legalize same sex marriage when Governor Andrew Cuomo swiftly signed a bill passed only hours before by the state Senate (and earlier by the Assembly, the equivalent of the House of Representatives in the Mississippi Legislature) that gives all the rights and privileges of marriage to homosexual and lesbian couples.

Such stories have become commonplace in America, where the homosexual lobby has made great political strides in the past two decades toward the total dismantlement of traditional marriage as we have understood and practiced it in this country: one man and one woman legally and spiritually bonded for life (although we heterosexuals had already made a pretty big mess of the "bonded for life" part).

The New York story has several uniquely troubling aspects, however.

Just as a reminder for states like Mississippi that see the homosexual political juggernaut heading our way, Mississippi Baptists and Christians in general should not lose sight of the fact that we are called upon by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to share the Gospel with every lost soul we encounter — including homosexuals. That might make some of us uncomfortable, but it's a fact (Matt. 28:18-20).

However, that doesn't mean we should be passive in our response to the homosexual movement's political and social agendas which were so evident in the New York legalization campaign.

First, New York became one of the few states to legalize same sex marriage through the legislative process. In many areas where same sex marriage has been legalized, it has been decreed by activist judges legislating from the bench. However, in New York it took an odd mix of Democratic and Republican representatives of the people to deliver a majority in favor of same sex marriage.

Democrats and Republicans alike promised in their last election campaigns to vote against same sex marriage, but supported it anyway. "I know my vote is a vote of conscience, and I am certainly at peace with my vote," said Senator Stephen Saland

of Poughkeepsie, one of the Republicans who voted in favor of same sex marriage, as reported by The Wall Street Journal.

The moral? Never trust what a politician says. Look at the whole of his/her record before deciding whether they deserve to be reelected. That's where voters find the true character of a politician, not in his/her words.

Secondly, the homosexual political lobby demonstrated in New York that it has honed itself into a fearsome electoral machine. The Wall Street Journal also reports that the Gill Action Fund, a pro-homosexual rights group funded by Denver philanthropist Tim Gill, pumped more than one million dollars into an organization named Fight Back NY, which targeted legislators who voted against previous versions of the same sex marriage bill. As a result, three of those legislators lost their seats — a sufficient number to turn the tide in favor of legalization.

"We wanted to send a very strong and clear message about what happens when you double-cross us," Gill's political director, Bill Smith, told the Journal.

Lastly, to make the same sex marriage bill more palatable New York politicians trotted out the old economic development pipe dream, much like Mississippi politicians do with gambling and alcohol.

A group of select state senators released a report they had commissioned that found same sex marriage would somehow generate an extra \$391 million for the state's businesses in the first three years after legalization. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the "I Do," advertising campaign to persuade homosexuals from across the country to come to New York City for their weddings. Various self-interested hotels and other venues showcased wedding packages for out-of-towners.

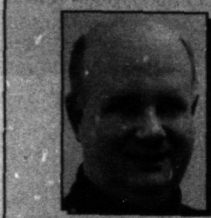
Will these economic development Sirens actually result in a clear, unmistakable jump of nearly \$400 million across the state, as promised? Again, Mississippi's experiences with gambling and alcohol would make an ideal case study.

America is in sad shape. We need to be praying for our country. Let us hold Jesus Christ above everything else, but let us also guard against the infiltration of that which is contrary to our faith and the Bible. If we don't do it, who will?

GUEST OPINION:

SBC 2011: the good, the bad

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor



The 2011 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which I attended June 14-15 in Phoenix, Az., falls in line with the classic "bad news, good news" scenarios.

First, the bad

• The attendance at the annual meeting was the lowest it's been since 1944, with less than 5,000 participants. There are many factors that played into this, but none of them are especially dire. The combination of economic shortfalls, the cost of travel, and the lack of any real controversy caused many to stay at home. The news of wildfires in Arizona and the thermonuclear sun over Phoenix didn't help, either.

• From a purely numerical standpoint, the Southern Baptist Convention has been in decline for, oh, fifty years or so. That's not pleasant to contemplate, especially for those prone to live in denial. USA Today reported that, "in 2010, Southern Baptists baptized 332,321, or 17,416 fewer than in 2009... This marks the eighth time in 10 years that baptisms have declined and the lowest number of baptisms since the 1950s."

The secular news media love this kind of news. Doesn't matter that we are seen in our best light in disaster relief and missions work; we show our worst side when

the "outside world" evaluates our annual meetings and the reports that come from them. Our public persona could sure use some rehab.

• The "world" doesn't understand that, in our style of governing ourselves, anyone on the floor of the convention can claim a microphone and say, uh, most anything. That does not make them a spokesperson for Southern Baptists at large. The news media love to quote some of our more colorful constituents. It makes for interesting, if skewed, reporting.

• We still tend to glorify Christian superstars, and there are still plenty of folks who love to try to fill that role.

• There are more ideologues out there than there are statesmen. Sometimes those presenting resolutions seemed to be claiming their fifteen minutes of fame.

My personal observation is that, as folk singer Bob Dylan famously wrote, "The times,

they are a-changin'," and we would do well to acknowledge and embrace that. I noted that this year there seemed to be more new, young pastors in the hotel lobbies and exhibit halls.

This is the first time I recall there being a suggested dress code from Convention leadership ("business casual"), which most people seemed all too glad to embrace. I felt that there was a considerable amount of diversity among conventioners — the SBC just doesn't feel like it has the cultural "sameness" with which I grew up. This is not a bad thing.

Now, the good news

• God is building His church. That does not mean that He is "building His Convention." I don't think He has one.

• There was very little said about theological differences. What debate there is seems to be more along the lines of methodology. Some feel that this has led to factions. Read

some of the rabid blogs out there, and you might come away with a sense of an SBC in its death throes. I disagree.

• There were definite emphases on the Cooperative Program, evangelism, and world missions.

• Having missionary commissioning services during the annual meeting was genuinely moving, inspiring, encouraging. We are still the greatest missionary sending entity in history.

• Conventioneers should have come away knowing we can accomplish more together than we can separately. While some churches have the resources to be their own sending entity, Mt. Pisgah Number Two Baptist Church out in the middle of the county can do extraordinary world ministry through cooperation.

Perhaps in the midst of us going to great lengths to reach unreached people groups, we can also come to recognize the worth and value of those fellow Southern Baptists around us who might just have insights that are worth hearing. Recognizing that it is not 1958 and we are grappling with the realities of a 2011 world is a vital step.

Treating those who may have "new ideas" or "new methods" as people with dignity and respect sure wouldn't hurt. By God's grace, we've made great strides in that direction.

Messengers OK eight resolutions at SBC

PHOENIX (BP and local reports) — Messengers adopted eight resolutions during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) on June 14-15 in Phoenix.

A resolution on immigration, which was reported in detail in the June 23 issue of The Baptist Record, was one of eight approved either unanimously or overwhelmingly during the morning and afternoon sessions June 15. The other resolutions are reported in this article.

In an unusual move, messengers called to the floor and passed a resolution on the gender-neutral 2011 New International Version (NIV) — a proposed resolution that was not reported to the full convention by the Resolutions Committee. The resolution, which was overwhelmingly approved by messengers, expressed "profound disappointment" with publication of the new translation and "respectfully request[ed] that LifeWay not sell the version in its stores."

The resolution came to the floor when Indiana pastor Tim Overton persuaded messengers to address the 2011 version of the popular translation that his resolution said had "gone beyond acceptable translation standards" regarding gender. His resolution said 75% of the flawed gender translation in the TNIV appears in the new NIV. Southern Baptist messengers expressed their disapproval of the TNIV in a 2002 resolution.

Overton, pastor of Halteman Village Church in Muncie, Ind., told messengers the Southern Baptist Convention needed to address the issue in its role as a leading voice in the evangelical Christian community.

Speaking for the committee regarding its decision not to present Overton's measure, Biloxi native Russell Moore said the members did not believe the issue "rose to the level of needing to be addressed by this year's convention."

Moore, dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said the TNIV was "something of a stealth move," which was not true in this case. He also said the NIV is not in the same position now as it was in the past, since such translations as the Holman Christian Standard Bible and English Standard Version are now available.

He also said the NIV is "just one of many Bibles out there [with] similar language."

The committee did not oppose passage of the resolution. At a news conference held later in the day, Moore said, "The committee, of course, shares the concerns that were expressed in the resolution. The issue was not whether or not we would affirm the NIV and its changes but whether or not we thought the current changes were worthy of being addressed" at this year's meeting.

The resolution on hell came as part of an ongoing response to the publication earlier this year of Michigan pastor Rob Bell's book, Love Wins. Bell's controversial book "called into question the church's historic teaching on the doctrine of eternal punishment of the unregenerate," as the resolution described it.

In adopting the resolution, messengers affirmed "our belief in the biblical teaching on eternal, conscious punishment of the unregenerate in hell." The resolution also urged Southern Baptists



RESOLUTIONS — Biloxi native Russell Moore (left), dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; Paul Jimenez, chair of the SBC Committee on Resolutions and pastor of Taylors First Church in Taylors, S.C.; and Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville discuss newly adopted resolutions at a press conference June 15 at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Az. (BP photo)

"to proclaim faithfully the depth and gravity of sin against a holy God, the reality of hell, and the salvation of sinners by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, to the glory of God alone."

The other resolutions approved:

• Reaffirmed the convention's belief that all people have religious freedom, meaning they possess the liberty "to convert to another religion or to no religion, to seek to persuade others of the claims of one's religion, and to worship without harassment or impediment from the state." It also called for prayer for persecuted Christians throughout the world.

• Urged U.S. President Barack Obama to reverse course by ordering the U.S. Department of Justice to defend fully the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in federal court, and renewed the convention's call for a constitutional amendment defining marriage as only between a man and a woman.

DOMA is a 1996 federal law that defines marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman and protects states from having to recognize same-sex marriages performed in states where such unions are

legal. Obama and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced in February that the Justice Department will no longer defend the law against pending legal challenges.

• Called for corporate repentance and prayer, urging Southern Baptists to seek "a life of genuine repentance, Kingdom-focused prayer times for sweeping revival and spiritual awakening, and consistent prayer for specific lost people, missions, and ministry."

• Encouraged civility in the public discussion of controversial issues and denounced "the speech or activities of any individual or group that brings shame upon the name of Christ and His gospel."

The resolution urged Southern Baptists "to speak biblically and authoritatively with conviction, kindness, and gentleness."

• Thanked God and those He used in producing the annual meeting of Southern Baptists.

Ten resolutions were submitted for this year's meeting. The committee declined to act on some but addressed others in the final resolutions recommended to the messengers. No Mississippi Baptists were appointed to this year's Committee on Resolutions.

Looking back

10 years ago

A new and improved web site for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is now open for business at www.mbc.org, utilizing the latest Internet technology to provide significantly more information in an up-to-date and user friendly format.

20 years ago

James T. Draper, pastor of First Church, Euless, Tex., is nominated to be the eighth president of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. If elected, he will succeed Lloyd Elder, who has been president of the Southern Baptist publishing house since 1984.

50 years ago

The annual Queens' Court was held at Camp Garaywa June 24-26, with approximately 200 girls, members of the Girl's Auxiliary who have reached the rank of Queen, participating.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

NDT VCLML LNST,
LWYCPWTZ ANHA
HWMRACT YC; BWG S
FCGRCSIC HANH
ISGHMC SL QWDC
WMH WB YC.
EMUC CSQAH: BWGHZ-
LSJ

Clue: B = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Seven: Seven

FOLLOWING TWITTER

In the middle of June 2011, the President announced that he would be giving out regular tweets on his Twitter account so that step by step and day by day through the campaign for another term in office, people could follow him.

Now even if you are not a person on Twitter, you probably are aware that it is a social networking phenomenon that allows people on Twitter to every so often, whether it is every five minutes or five days, give an update on some part of their lives in 140 alphabetical characters or less. It is just a sentence or two, a remark or so, that anybody on Twitter can go to and check out what is going on in a person's life. Personally, I am just amazed by the size and scope of Twitter. It is astounding to me how many people put out to the world personal information or, more amazing than that, meaningless information, which leads me to another step of incredible bewilderment and that is why people read such stuff.

I have read people's tweets telling what they were eating, what they were wearing, where they were going, or who they just saw. Most of the time my thought is, "Who cares?" Apparently a lot of people do because they passionately and feverishly follow the stuff. Now since the President is on Twitter, you would assume that probably people will be following his travels or his thoughts more than anyone else with a Twitter account. That is not the case! In fact, President Barack Obama is number three of the most followed



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

persons on Twitter. Who could possibly have more people following them?

Now hold on to your seat and get this. Number one is Lady Gaga. Number two is Justin Bieber. The most powerful position on the planet, the President of the United States, comes in number three behind the Gaga and the Bieber. Congratulations! When I saw that I could not believe my eyes, but it was true. I thought about a study that I had read many years ago about some sociologists who were studying why animals are such social creatures. In the study they chose fish that generally move about not individually, but in clusters or schools. They wondered what made them that way. The answer is that they follow.

The best I remember, in the study they took a lead fish out of the school and operated on the creature removing the part of the brain that was thought to be the controlling mechanism for social activity. After healing a bit, they put the fish back into the tank with the other fish in the school to see what would happen. The fish with part of his brain missing darted off into a corner and

underneath some debris to try to find a place to hide. Intrigue and curiosity took over in the rest of the school of fish and they took off after him. Quickly, he darted into another place to try to get away and the whole school followed him. In short order, all of the fish in the tank were darting from place to place following a fish with only a part of a brain.

I confess to you that I have never met Lady Gaga, but I have seen her interviewed. I have seen her clothing style and have briefly seen her sing, play, and perform on television. If she is being followed by more people on Twitter than anyone else on the planet, well, you understand why I began to think about the story of the study involving the lame brain fish.

Here is the focus of my thought today. It is not on any of those folks, but it is on us. Who are we following? Who are you following? Sadly, oftentimes we reduce our Christian faith to attending some services occasionally and maybe even participating in some of the church activi-

ties. We lose sight of the fact that genuine Christianity is a walk with Jesus. To His early disciples He said, "Come, follow Me." To those of us who listen to Him now He says, "Come, follow Me!" One by one those early disciples left their nets, or left the receipt of customs, or left their families and followed Him. Their passions and dreams were set aside in order to follow Him, see His vision, and be a part of His great kingdom work.

For century after century the call has remained clear and the response continues to be nothing short of amazing as people continue to say, "Yes Lord, I want to follow You." While Twittering is a phenomenon of social connectivity today, all of us should keep in mind that the folks you follow will affect who you are and where you end up. The writer of Hebrews summed it up for us in a very pointedly and powerful way when he reminded us to look to Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. He will bless you and He will keep you on the right path to the right destination. Follow Him!

The author can be contacted at jfufal@mbcb.org.

MS POSITIONS

YAZOO COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IS CURRENTLY ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS DIRECTOR. Please mail resumes to 2014 Country Club Drive, Yazoo City, MS 39194, attention: Caleb Clark.

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH. Resumes may be emailed to questions@cbcbrookhaven.org or mailed to P.O. Box 591, Brookhaven, MS 39602.

THRASHER BAPTIST CHURCH IN PRENTISS COUNTY IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER. Resumes can be submitted to Music Minister Search Committee, 200 CR 1040, Booneville, MS 38829 or emailed to dougakestraw@yahoo.com.

NEW SIGHT BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR. Send resumes to: Charlotte Newell, 1017 Common Street, Wesson, MS. 39191 or email to wanchar2353@att.net.

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH, VICKSBURG, IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Send resumes to Trinity Baptist Church, Attn: Music Search Committee, 3365 Porters Chapel Rd., Vicksburg, MS 39180, or email to trinity6@netzero.net by July 5, 2011.

GOOD HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, PURVIS, MS IN LAMAR COUNTY IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Resumes may be submitted at kristi@goodhopepurvis.com or mailed to P.O. Box 1117, Purvis, MS 39473.

FLOWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL OR PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER to work with both the children's division and the youth division as a coordinator not necessarily a teacher. Please send resumes to Flowood Baptist Church, 1649 Old Fannin Road, Flowood, MS 39232. For further information you may call 601-992-6464.

FBC OLOH, NEAR HATTIESBURG, MS IS TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF SENIOR PASTOR. Please submit to Chris Broussard, pastor search committee chairman, e-mail brouss_5@yahoo.com.

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Homosexuality issues prominent at SBC annual meet

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptist Seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr. defended his comments about homosexuality at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) June 15 in Phoenix, Az., saying the comments reflect biblical teaching and standing by his observation that many churches engage in homophobia.

Mohler's comments came in the form of a three-minute answer from the podium to a question posed by Georgia messenger Peter Lumpkins, after Mohler had delivered the Southern Baptist report. Christians have "not done well on this issue," Mohler said, have told only "half the truth" regarding homosexuality, and have practiced a "certain form of homophobia."



TRADING VIEWS — Bryant Wright (back to camera), president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), meets at the 2011 SBC annual meeting in Phoenix, Az., with members of a coalition of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) groups who hand-delivered a petition to Wright asking the SBC for an apology for its Biblical beliefs regarding the lifestyle of LGBT people. (BP photo)

Mohler went on to say it's "clear that it's more than a choice" and is "not something that people can just turn on and turn off." He also was clear in calling homosexuality a sin. "We are not a Gospel people unless we understand that only the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ gives a homosexual person any hope of release from homosexuality," Mohler told messengers.

While bloggers like Bryan Fischer of American Family Radio in Tupelo have strongly criticized the remarks, two prominent evangelical leaders who minister to the homosexual community voiced their support for Mohler's statements — Alan Chambers, president of Exodus International, the nation's largest Christian organization dedicated to reaching out to homosexuals; and Bob Stith, the Southern Baptist Convention's national strategist for gender issues and the representative of the convention's Task Force on Ministry to Homosexuals.

Mohler was speaking a "Gospel message" at the annual meeting, Chambers said. "It's certainly the same one that Exodus proclaims and shares and takes to the churches. I think what he said was spot

on. I love that he had the credibility and the ability to share what he shared in a very necessary venue."

Stith said evangelicals "should at least acknowledge that we have not responded well" to the need to reach out to homosexuals. The truth about homosexuality's sinfulness must be proclaimed, Stith said, but it must be done with compassionate love. There is a great need, he said, to be "proactive and redemptive."

"I can only evaluate my own experience but my approach was almost entirely negative and harsh," he said, reflecting on his days as a full-time pastor. "One of the results of this was that no one dealing with this issue would ever have come to me for help. After God changed my heart, I discovered that several members of my congregation had family



Mohler

members dealing with this and they had never felt free to discuss it with me. I've since talked to many strugglers who said they would never have approached their pastor for help. We don't even realize what we've done."

Saying that Mohler's views reflect his own, Stith said his beliefs on the church's approach to homosexuality was influenced by conversations with hundreds of people struggling with homosexuality, as well as parents of those struggling with it. "While I don't believe in the genetic arguments at all, I do believe in predispositions, which is not the same thing as predetermination," Stith said. "As Bible-believing Christians we shouldn't be surprised at this since the Bible makes clear that we are all born into sin..."

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

- New Hope Church, Harmantown:** July 11 - 15, 6 - 8:30 p.m.; meal furnished; kick-off party July 9, 2:30 p.m. with water slide, hot dogs; graduation and BBQ July 17, 6 p.m.
- New Providence Church, Hazlehurst:** July 10 - 15; registration, July 10, 5 p.m.; supper, 5:30 p.m.; classes 6 - 8 p.m. Sun. - Thurs; Fri. night commencement, 6:30 p.m. followed by food and fellowship.
- Lynn Ray Road Church, Petal:** July 8 - 10; Fri. registration, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. with special guest Joey Harris, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Sun., 9 a.m. - noon.
- Moselle Memorial Church, Ellisville:** June 6 - 10; attendance, 120 including students and staff; commencement and meal Sat. evening, with 200 attending the program; Keith
- Thompson, pastor;** shown are some of the participants.

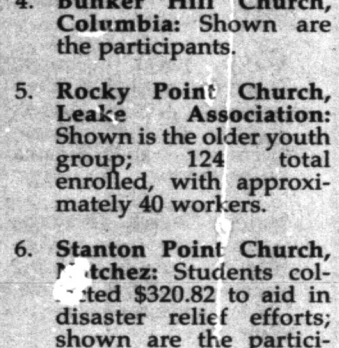
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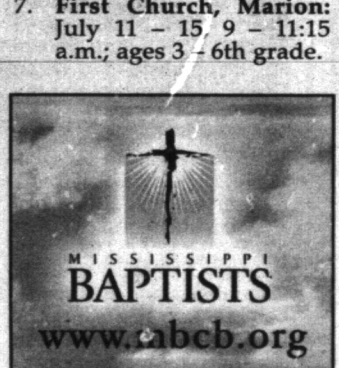
4. Bunker Hill Church, Columbia



5. Rocky Point, Leake Association



6. Stanton Point Church, Natchez



8. Moselle Memorial Church, Ellisville

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



2. Blackwell ordination



3. Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale



4. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto



5. Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale



1. First Church, Cleveland, is hosting a simulcast of Beth Moore's Living Proof Live Conference on September 10 at the B.P.A.C. (Bologna Performing Arts Center) at Delta State University in Cleveland. Tickets are \$25 and a group rate is being offered at \$22.50 for 10 or more purchased by August 8th. To order tickets, contact the church (662-843-2701). The conference will be an all day event from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. with a lunch break. Doors open at 7:30 a.m.
2. Harmony Church, Quitman, ordained Todd Blackwell to the gospel ministry June 5. Shown are pastor Norman Robinson and Blackwell.
3. Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, held a baby dedication Mother's Day. Shown are the participants.
4. Seven girls from Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto, attended the Missions Camp for Girls at Garaywa Camp & Conference Center. Shown, front row, are Riley Watts, Karly Leake, and Georganna Allen; back row, Charleise Wilson, Kacy Bui, Kinley Douglas, and Carrie Pyeatt. Hal Hatten, pastor.
5. Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, recognizes their children's Bible drillers Samatha Cochran, Mason Herrington, and Brianna Wager, shown.
6. Sunrise Church, Carthage, sent a mission team to Peru May 29 - June 5, including members of First Church, Union. Shown are the participants.
7. Fifteen children from Holly Church, Alcorn, attended their first Mississippi Baptist's Kids' Camp. Shown are the participants. Kevin Cooley, children/youth minister; John Boler, pastor.
8. West Heights Church, Pontotoc, held a GA recognition service May 25. Shown are the participants.
9. Bunker Hill Church, Columbia, made their transition into their new sanctuary June 19, with a dedication scheduled for July 17. Shown are the participants.



6. Sunrise Church, Carthage



7. Holly Church, Alcorn



8. West Heights Church, Pontotoc



9. Bunker Hill Church, Columbia

JUST FOR THE RECORD



10. Providence Church, Meadville



11. The Blanchards



12. Navilla Church, McComb



13. Dorsey Church, Mooreville



14. Sylvarena Church, Wesson

10. Providence Church, Meadville, dedicated their renovated nursery and recognized Jessie Marie Terrell for over 20 years of working in the church nursery June 12. Shown are pastor Charlie Seale and Terrell.
11. Dorsey Church, Mooreville, held a baby dedication Apr. 17. Shown are Clint and Kayla Blanchard with Cloee Klair Blanchard.
12. The RA's of Navilla Church, McComb, attended a Mississippi Braves game Memorial Day. They met U.S. Congressman Gregg Harper who threw out the first pitch. Shown with Harper are, front row, Devin Coley, Jesse Fortenberry, Dakota Coley, Christopher Romack, and Zack Shamp; back row, Colton Yates, Michael Romack, and Wyatt Fortenberry. Mary Evelyn Fortenberry, leader.
13. Dorsey Church, Mooreville, held a baby dedication Apr. 17. Shown are Ed and Britni York with James Cohen and Charlie.
14. Sylvarena Church, Wesson, held a baby dedication May 15. Shown are the babies, their parents, and grandparents.



15. Slayden Church, Lamar



16. Mt. Pleasant Church, Bogue Chitto

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. DeKalb Church, Kemper Association: 175th anniversary, July 17; registration, 10 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Hal Bates, speaker; Steve Turner and Young Believers, music; James Ruffin, pastor.
2. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto: Revival, July 17 - 21; Sun., 11 a.m.; 7 p.m. nightly; Bruce Brady, Hal Hatten, Wayne Moak, Calvin Price, Wiley Reid, and Leon Wallace, speakers; Ed May, music; Hal Hatten, pastor.
3. Heucks Retreat Church, Brookhaven: Homecoming, July 17; service, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; Thad Owens, Jr., speaker.
4. Hickory Grove, Sumrall: Revival, July 17 - 22; Sun., 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon service; 7 p.m. nightly; Phillip Duncan, speaker.
5. Tillatoba Church, Tillatoba: Revival, July 17 - 20; meal, 6 p.m.; worship, 7 p.m.; Eugene Walden, speaker; Sherri Berry, music.
6. Goodwater Church, Smith County: Homecoming, July 10; service, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; cemetery association meeting, 1:30 p.m.; John Adcock, speaker; Mike Walker, pastor.
7. Sauls Valley Church, Monticello: Homecoming and revival, July 8 - 11; Fri., Sat., Mon., 7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and time of testimony; David Whitehead and Bendon Ginn, speakers.
8. First Church, Runnelstown: Revival, July 10 - 13; Sun., 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Argile Smith, speaker; John White, music; Chris Layton, pastor.



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Alabama salons vote end to abortions after 20 weeks

WASHINGTON (BP) — Alabama has become the fifth state to enact a ban on abortions at 20 weeks or more into pregnancy based on evidence a baby in the womb experiences pain by that point.

Gov. Robert Bentley, a Republican, signed the Alabama Pain-capable Unborn Child Protection Act into law June 15. The measure prohibits an abortion beginning at 20 weeks' gestation unless it is required to prevent the mother's death.

"I believe that life begins at conception and I signed this bill to further commit my promise to protect the life of an unborn child," Bentley said in a written statement.

In 2010, Nebraska became the first state to outlaw pain-capable abortions. This year, Idaho, Kansas, and Oklahoma have enacted similar bans. The

pain-capable model sets the benchmark earlier than one based on fetal viability, which can be 22 to 24 weeks.

New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch, however, vetoed a pro-life measure on the same date. Lynch, a Democrat, rejected a parental notification bill despite strong support in the state legislature. The Senate voted 17-7 for the legislation while the House approved it 256-102. The bill would have required an abortion doctor to notify in writing at least one parent of an under-age girl 48 hours before doing an abortion.

The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) said Lynch's stated reasons for the veto form a "litany of excuses" that support exceptions that would aid abusers of minor girls. "Governor Lynch's veto says to New Hampshire parents: if your minor daughter

is pregnant, you have no rights," Mary Spaulding Balch, NRLC's director of state legislation, said in a written release. "This is a totally irresponsible decision which can only give comfort to pedophiles."

There are 29 states with parental involvement laws that are being enforced, according to NRLC.

Meanwhile, the North Carolina Senate passed in a 29-20 vote June 15 a bill requiring a 24-hour waiting period before an abortion, according to the Charlotte Observer. The legislation also would require an abortion doctor to show the mother considering an abortion an ultrasound image of her unborn child. The House passed the bill 71-48.

In Maine, the state House of Representatives voted down three pro-life proposals,

LifeNews reported June 8. The House voted 80-63 against a bill to strengthen a parental consent law, 88-58 against an informed consent measure and 81-63 against a 24-hour waiting period.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed June 16 a measure barring funding for the abortion drug RU 486, including its use in "telemedicine," or Webcam, abortions.

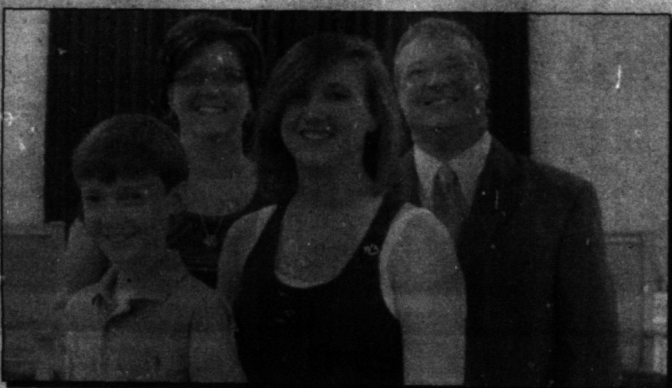
Members of the House voted 240-176 for the amendment, which was attached to a spending bill for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration and related agencies. The House approved the overall spending 217-203.

The pro-life amendment, sponsored by Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, prohibits any money granted in the bill from being used for the two-step abortion drug. It takes particular aim at "telemed" abortion, a method developed by Planned Parenthood in Iowa to dispense RU 486 to a woman by means of video-conferencing.

King's amendment clarifies that "telemedicine" grants may not be used to disburse the abortion drug, according to his office. About 1,900 "telemed" abortions using RU 486 have been performed in Iowa, his office said.

STAFF CHANGES

1. Ethel Church, Ethel, has called Joey Barnard as pastor effective June 6. Front, Mark and Mary Barnard; back, Cheri and Joey Barnard.



1. The Barnards

OBITUARY

Edward W. Pendergrast, retired pastor, died May 10. Pendergrast was a graduate of Clarke College and Luther Rice Seminary. He was a veteran of the U.S. Navy where he served on the U.S.S. Hansford in Iwo Jima, Okinawa, the Philippines, and Yokohama, Japan. He was married Aug. 1, 1947 to Willie Jean Ramage, for 64 years. He was a minister for 46 years, serving Union Grove, Pleasant Grove, Parker, College Hill, Second Church, Drivers Hat, Antioch, and Rocky Mount churches in Calhoun County; Montevista, Webster County; Coldwater, Neshoba County; Epehus, Scott County; Carnation, Chickasaw County; Phillip, Tallahatchie County; Randolph, Pontotoc County; and Glendale, Washington County. He served on a medical-dental mission trip to Honduras in 1984. Survivors include his wife, Jean Pendergrast, Derma; daughter, Deborah Lofton (Frank), Calhoun City; son, Donald Pendergrast, Ridgeland; two grandchildren, Brandon Lofton, Erick Lofton; a great-grandchild, Jacob Lofton; and sister, Dorothy Felker, Fairview, Ore. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Wanda Kay Pendergrast, parents, John L. and Myrtle Pendergrast, and one brother and three sisters. Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. at Derma Church with burial in New Liberty cemetery, Calhoun County, May 13.

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups—and individuals—elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

MAY 2011

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Mr. Bobby C. Gardner
Mrs. Thelma M. Gates
Herbie & Janice Kirk
Mr. Wendell Gavin
Robert & Carolyn Sullivan
Mary Geiger
Charles & Charlene Renfrow
Clyde Gill
Men's SSC, FBC, Bude
Nelda G. Gilliam
Mr. Victor Ferguson
Mrs. Mamie Gray Barlow Glass
Glen & Dianna Bowers
Mr. & Mrs. Gary J. Ferebee
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Dr. & Mrs. Richard B. Warren Jr.
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Mrs. Modene Graham
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Mr. Dan Grantham
Mr. & Mrs. J. V. Parker
Miss Florrie Green
Glynn & Jean Jones
Mrs. Johnnie Green
Mrs. Lee Audis Jayroe
Ms. Linda Pepper
Margaret Quinn & Family
Mr. R. G. Griffith
Mrs. Margaret P. Lee
Shirley Halley
David & Kay Halley
Dr. Albert Hard
Ms. Virginia B. Birdsong
Doyle Harlan
Jerry and Glenda Fry

MAY 2011

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Edna Earl Harrington
M. E. (Sonny) & Margaret Newton
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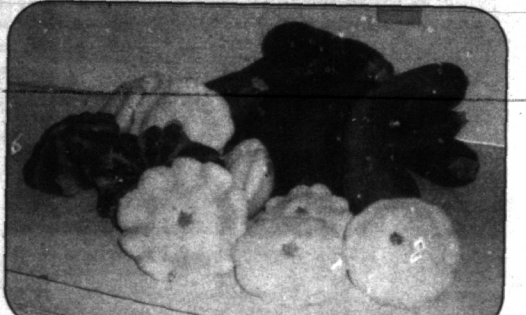
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June 24, 2011 several families from First Baptist Church Jackson planned a day of games and activities and provided lunch for the children and teens at The Baptist Children's Village Dickerson Place Campus in Brookhaven.



Members of First Baptist Church Mathiston worked June 20-24, 2011 to put on a new roof at O'Neal Cottage at The Baptist Children's Village Dickerson Place Campus in Brookhaven.



The Baptist Children's Village thanks Buds & Bloom of Brookhaven for donating summer garden plants for several of our campuses. Pictured is one of the gardens along with some of the squash and zucchini recently harvested.



4a. Hogue



4b. Fletcher



4c. Coleman

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE Personal Rights

Philippians 3:17-21; 2 Peter 2:10b-19

By Beth Bowman

This week begins a series of 5 lessons on our freedom in Christ. Believers may confuse our Christian freedom with a license to sin. There is always a temptation among Christians to indulge in the pleasures of this world that are most often attributed to the ungodly. In today's lesson, Peter and Paul challenge the believers of their day who faced similar temptations as we do in 21st Century America.

Personal Freedom means doing it my way. (2 Peter 2:10b-14)

Peter is describing people who have no fear of God. They enjoy doing wrong in full view of God and those witnessing their sinful lifestyles. Verse 13 says it this way, "They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime." (NASB). They also enjoy

being deceitful. They are always looking for ways to sin with hearts full of greed. The phrase "trained in greed" means that those living unapologetic, sinful lives have allowed Satan to create a gluttonous desire for more worldly pleasure. This describes the people of Peter's day who revel in their personal freedom, living as if there is no higher authority they are accountable to. They have no apologies for their lifestyle. The ungodly even take great pleasure in seeing others join them in their selfish sinfulness.

Personal Freedom means giving an account. (2 Peter 2:15-19)

Peter compared self-indulgent sinners to Balaam. In Numbers 22-24, God used a donkey to confront Balaam when he was seeking to flaunt his personal free-



Bowman

dom in the face of God and what He had instructed him to do. In describing these sinners, Peter refers to them as "springs without water and mists driven by a storm." In other words, there appears to be pleasure and contentment in their lives but the reality is there is a deep emptiness to a life lived in rebellion to God. While those exercising their freedom to live a life of sin seem to be carefree and experiencing the pleasures of this world without consequence, in reality, they are slaves to sin and Satan. Peter is challenging and confronting their sinfulness with the reality of their emptiness.

Personal Freedom means rejecting self-indulgence (Philippians 3:17-19)

Paul encourages the Philippians to recognize the sinful, depraved living of those outside of God's will. He reminds them that their hope is in heaven. Paul challenged the Philippians

to follow the examples he had held up for them along with the example of others who were living for Christ. Those who are living in sin are enemies of Christ. There is no middle ground; you are living for Christ or you are not. In Galatians 2:20, Paul said "I have been crucified with Christ." Those living in rebellion to God are willing enemies of the cross of Christ. The end result for a life dedicated to self is destruction. Paul reminds us that the ungodly only think about today with no thought of the consequences for their behavior.

Personal Freedom means Heaven is waiting for believers (Philippians 3:20-21)

Paul reminds the Philippian believers of their ultimate citizenship in heaven. We are waiting for the return of our Savior and Lord. When He returns our bodies will be changed. They will be transformed into heavenly, eternal bodies. This process is called glorification. Paul used the promise of our glorification as an encouragement to the church in Philippi to stay devoted to

Christ. We can claim this promise for our culture today.

There is an old saying, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." I was reminded of this when our 3 year old grandson, Cade, came to the house this week. His head was shaved and he was grinning from ear to ear. His Mom explained to me that each time Brandon, her husband and Cade's dad, shaved his head, Cade insisted on shaving his also. It makes us smile to see that precious boy wanting to imitate his dad's hairstyle. We pray that Cade will grow up to imitate his Dad's love for God and family, too. It is a great example of what Paul encouraged the believers to do in Phil.3:17: "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you." (NIV) Let's all reject what the world offers and imitate those who live Godly, holy lives!

Bowman is Minister of Connection at First Church, Brandon, and a speaker for women's events.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE Never Say It's Hopeless

Jeremiah 18:1-15

By Harold Simmons

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That is an admonition I have heard many times. And there is some truth in the saying. The idea is that if something is doing what it was created to do, then don't do anything to it.

In the creation narrative, there is a repetitive phrase: "And God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1 NIV). Even after God created man, the phrase is used. At that point, man did not need "fixing." However, after introducing sin into the world, man did need fixing and God was willing to do just that. God created us and is able and willing to fix the sin problem in our lives. Jeremiah brings this revelation to us in our study passage.

Appreciate the Lord's Patience (Jeremiah 18:1-4)

Jeremiah is so careful to let us know that the message in these verses is from the Lord. Jeremiah did not dream this up. This phrase, which occurs over and over in Jeremiah, is to validate what is being given to Jeremiah. The source is God; the message is God's.

Not only did God want Jeremiah to hear what He said, He wanted Jeremiah to have a visual to reinforce what he was telling him. God sent Jeremiah to the potter's house to watch what was happening there. When he arrived, the potter was "throwing" a jar which was probably the most common item the potter made. That would mean that the potter had the most experience in making a jar. But, there was a



Simmons

flaw in the jar. This flaw caused the potter to start over using the same clay. The potter made another jar that may not have been shaped just like the first jar. The new jar's shape was up to the potter: "so he made another jar, as it seemed good for him to do" (Jeremiah 18:4b HCSB).

The potter's patience is seen as he made the flawed jar into something useful.

God is like the potter. When we, His creation, became flawed with sin, God patiently uses our "clay" to remake us into something useful for His kingdom. We are the same substance who are remade (born again) as a new creation. "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV)

Appreciate the Lord's Power (Jeremiah 18:5-10)

Not only is God willing to take away our flaw of sin, He is able to

do so. He has the power to remove our sin as far as the east is from the west. Just as the clay was responsive to the power of the potter to create another jar, we need to be responsive to God's power to change us.

The Lord tells Jeremiah of His power (sovereignty) over all the nations, not just Israel and Judah. The nations are also His creations and under His control. By His power, God can either build up or tear down a nation of people. What God does to any people is completely dependent on their response to God.

A wise old man was approached by a young man who thought he could outsmart the wise old man. "Old man," he said, "What do I have in my hand?" The old man could see a bird's tail sticking out of the younger's hand and said "a bird." "Right, but is the bird alive or dead?" The young man had told his friends that if the old man said that the bird was alive, he would crush it before he opened his hand. If

the old man said the bird was dead, the young man would open his hand and let the bird fly away. The old man thought for a moment and said "It is as you will."

The Lord told Jeremiah the fate of any nation was as they will. If they responded to the Lord, He would open His hand and let them survive. If not, He would crush them and destroy them.

Amend Your Ways (Jeremiah 18:11-15)

The Lord tells Jeremiah what He is about to do to His people and how they can interrupt these plans. But God knows how this people will react. In their stubbornness, they will continue what they are doing even though they know what God is going to bring about. God brings a very serious charge against them, but they just shrug it off. Sounds very much like us today.

Simmons is currently interim pastor at Cascilla Church, Cascilla

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE Personal Checklist

Galatians 3:1-3, 10-14, 19-26

By Beth Bowman

I am a big fan of "to-do" lists. I like to write down what I need to do and I love to check it off when I am done. My problem is not that I plan and make the lists. My problem is keeping up with the lists. How many times have I thought, "if I could find my list, I would know what I need to do..."! The Galatians were struggling with their own "to-do" list. Unfortunately, this list was a "man-created in hopes to please God" list. This lesson focuses on the sharp contrasts between faith and works.

Forgetting Faith (Galatians 3:1-3) and **Religious "to-do" lists** (Galatians 3:10-14)

Many times Paul addresses the churches with "Brothers" or "Saints". In this passage, he breaks from his norm with the

opener, "O Foolish Galatians" (vs 1, NASB). This word translated is "fools, disobedient or bewitched." Right from the start Paul was expressing his frustration with the church at Galatia. They had come to faith in Jesus but were still resorting to the law to protect and keep their righteousness. Furthermore, after experiencing the Holy Spirit in salvation, they again began to rely on their works. Martin Luther's commentary explains it, "Right here we have one more difference between the Law and the Gospel. The Law does not bring on the Holy Ghost. The Gospel, however, brings on the gift of the Holy Ghost, because it is the nature of the Gospel to convey good gifts. The Law and the Gospel



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are contrary ideas. They have contrary functions and purposes. To endow the Law with any capacity to produce righteousness is to plagiarize the Gospel. The Gospel brings donations. It pleads for open hands to take what is being offered. The Law has nothing to give. It demands, and its demands are impossible."

Those trying to live under the laws are cursed because there is no way anyone can keep all of the laws. James 2:10 states it this way, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." (NIV) These verses are demonstrating the IMPOSSIBILITY of perfectly keeping the Law.

Embracing Faith in Christ (Galatians 3:19-26)

The Law was given because of the sinfulness of man. It was a guide for right living until the promised one, Jesus, would come. The Law was the only way

that Old Testament God followers could earn His favor.

So, what does the Law do for us? Since it is impossible to keep and obey? The Law demonstrates for us the beauty of our Savior. The Law exposes the sinfulness of man and demonstrates the graciousness of God. Our love for God, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit compels us, propels us toward right living. Keeping the law does not propel us to the Savior.

In verse 25 we read, "But since that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian." (HCSB) The guardian refers to more of a child-protector. Some translations use the word tutor or custodian. The Greek word is actually paidagogos. Bible Gateway explains the paidagogos as a "slave whose special task was to look after a child. He exercised a general supervision over the boy's activities, and it was his responsibility to bring him to the teacher who would give him the instruction that befitted his station." Among the Greeks and the Romans the

name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them, before arriving at the age of manhood. What an awesome picture of what the law does for us. The law protected us until the time of true faith in the only way of salvation. Thank the Lord that we are not under the guardianship of the law anymore but we have the freedom to place our faith in Christ. That freedom moves us to obey the laws of God!

What's the take away from all of this? Throw away your spiritual "to-do" lists if they are keeping you legallyistically tied to earning a right standing with God. Stop and thank God for the blessing and in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit and let Him guide you in obeying God in all that you do.

Bowman is Minister of Connection at First Church, Brandon, and a speaker for women's events.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE Submit to Divine Discipline

Jeremiah 19:3-6; 21: 1-5, 11-12

By Harold Simmons

The coach said, "Bend over and catch your ankles." I knew what was coming next. I could hear the swish of the paddle as it headed toward my posterior. I knew from experience that it was going to smart. And it did. When I straightened up, I also knew I did not want any more of the same.

The Lord told Jeremiah that he should buy an earthen jar and call the city elders to the city gate. There, Jeremiah was to smash the jar in their sight and hearing and give them a message from the Lord. They had broken the covenant with the Lord. The punishment was to be just as devastating to the people of Jerusalem as Jeremiah's action was to the jar.

Spiritual Unfaithfulness (Jeremiah 19:3-6)

The people had made a covenant with God. He had said to them that He would be their God and they would be His people. They had promised to have no other God but Him. This promise, this covenant, they had broken. Indeed, they still did worship Him, but the problem was that they worshipped other gods also.

While walking the streets of Tokyo, I came to a temple that was very old. As I approached the entrance, I saw incense wands smoking and sending up sweet smelling perfume. I watched people come and go, lighting the perfume sticks and leaving them smoking. Then I went inside the temple and watched people praying to an image (idol). The idol was sta-



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tionary and had been for centuries. The people were praying to a god that could not do anything for them. This god could not change anything in their lives. It was then that I got a picture of the people of Jeremiah's day bowing before a powerless god. They were even willing to sacrifice their children to this god, giving their most precious possession to the non-god. The blood of the innocent was being shed and all for nothing.

It is no wonder to me that God was going to bring unspeakable horrors upon them. God said the Valley of Hinnom would be called the Valley of Slaughter. The atrocities are very difficult for our civilized minds to grasp.

Spiritual Blindness (Jeremiah 21:1-5)

Someone has said, "the most blind person is the person who refuses to see." I believe that is true for any person who refuses to see their own sin. That was

the condition of the people of Jerusalem in Jeremiah's day. After all the affronts they had given the Lord, their king sent envoys to Jeremiah to ask the Lord to do some "wonderful works" to get them out of their impending doom. Neither Zedekiah nor others could see the sins they were committing against the God whom they were asking to help them. By so doing they were recognizing His power but not His right to be worshipped as the only true god. They were forgetting that He is a God of Righteousness and can have no sin in His presence.

We, too, refuse to see this fact in our lives today. That is a self imposed blindness.

Social Injustice (Jeremiah 21:11-12)

The people of Judah did not have a right relationship with God and consequently did not treat others as they should. This timeless truth is true today. It is seen in the daily newspaper which reports killings and robbery and other sins.

God gives Jeremiah some very strong words to report to the king and the people of Judah. God wants them to understand the severity of their actions. God fully intends for the oppressed to be vindicated. He used words like "anger" and "unquenchable fire."

White phosphors is often used in warfare. It has been used in marking rockets to pinpoint the enemy or place for pilots to drop their bombs. When the rocket is fired from a forward air control airplane, the rocket breaks open on impact. The white phosphors gets oxygen it begins to burn. It will burn as long as it gets oxygen. If the chemical gets on a person's skin, it will burn right through the person unless the oxygen is cut off. It is unquenchable.

God has warned Judah that this is the type of punishment they can expect if they do not change their relationship with Him and with their fellowman.

Simmons is currently interim pastor at Cascilla Church, Cascilla

Happy Fourth of July from the Baptist Record

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attach-

ments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital

photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. **Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with**

tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-0330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.



Crossover 2011 leads Arizonans to accept Jesus

PHOENIX (BP) — Even as scorching temperatures rose to 102 degrees in Arizona's Urban Corridor, Southern Baptists mobilized in Crossover 2011 to bring the Living Water to people throughout the region's parched deserts.

Some 5.2 million people live and work in the corridor, which stretches from the Phoenix metro area down to Case Grande and Tucson. Several hundred of those people are new believers in Christ following a week of community evangelism and Crossover's Saturday events.

Phoenix was the 23rd year for Crossover, an evangelism event coordinated by the North American Mission Board, local associations, and churches that precedes the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting. This marks the second time the annual meeting has been in Phoenix, the first time in 2003.

"This past week, Arizona Baptists have truly shown their neighbors the love of Christ in

action through Crossover," said Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board. "This has been a model for how we can show people we care and then tell them why we care. It's exciting to celebrate those who have given their lives to Christ this week."

"I'm also excited that this has been an opportunity for existing churches and some of our new church plants to gain a higher profile in the community," Ezell added. "I'm praying all of our churches in the Phoenix and Tucson areas will benefit from Crossover and keep this momentum going long into the future."

To share the Gospel the week of June 7 and on Saturday, Arizona Baptists used dozens of block parties, a skateboard-a-thon, bottled water distribution, painting and landscaping projects at area schools, community arts and cultural festivals, women-only events and, of course, door-to-door evangelism.

SUMMER BREEZE — Children play with a parachute as the wind lifts the fabric during a block party at Primera Iglesia Bautista Hispana in Phoenix, Ariz., on Saturday evening, June 11. The festival was part of Crossover Arizona, a series of outreach events held across the state prior to the start of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 14-15. (BP photo)

Skateboarding

The most creative event had to be a six-hour Skateboard-A-Thon, sponsored by Mountain Ridge Church in Glendale, Az., attended by hundreds of kids and parents on Saturday.

A 19-year-old college student and member of Mountain Ridge, Presleigh Boulos — herself an avid skateboarder — knows skateboard enthusiasts are one of the most unreached groups in any community. So she envisioned a dynamic event that could reach skateboarders with the Gospel.

"I was just hoping to grow God's Kingdom," Boulos said. "We had 33 kids go up there and accept Christ. That was my goal, not how many attended."

"If the North American Mission Board and Cooperative Program giving wasn't here, we probably couldn't have been able to do this event, although we've wanted to for a long time," said Monty Patton, pastor of Mountain Ridge Church.

Arts, cars, mariachi

In Tucson, four SBC churches in the central part of the city hosted a Crossover community arts festival at Reid Park with activities for children, live music, food, and booths with artisans' hand-crafted items. By noon, volunteers from Calvary Church, Rising Star Church, First Southern Baptist Church, and North Swan Church — along with Intentional Community Evangelism (ICE) teams — had shared the Gospel scores of times, leading 12 kids to faith in Christ.

That number was on top of the 12 children and five adults who accepted Christ the night before at a Tucson car show hosted by

the same four churches. A series of events capped off by Crossover Saturday was also a gift to Tucson from the city's SBC churches and Catalina Association.

"Our prayer was to strengthen our association and churches, and reintroduce Tucson to Southern Baptists," said event organizer Gary Marquez, pastor of North Swan Church for 24 years. Marquez's wife Dianna held back tears as she told of the 17 children who made decisions for Christ during a mariachi festival at nearby Kennedy Park earlier in the week.

In east Tucson, Sabino Road Church sponsored a landscaping project at a local school and conducted door-to-door witnessing in the area's neighborhoods, joined by volunteers from Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

Back in the Phoenix metro area, one of the earliest Crossover events for women was held at the Christian Challenge Building on the campus of Arizona State University (ASU) at Tempe. ASU has 3,500 international students from 140 countries.

"Ministry to international students is a big thing at Arizona State," said Terrie Sullivan, executive director of Arizona Woman's Missionary Union. "Our event was designed to allow international women, either students or wives of students, to practice their English and give us an opportunity to love on them and show them God's love. Most are not Christians."

Women from several Asian countries and Kenya spent the session getting free manicures and learning how to make necklaces and scented bath salts.

Following a luncheon, they all left with scented candles — and an aroma of the Gospel.

Snow, illusions, paint

In spite of the heat, snow was the featured attraction at the three-acre campus of Royal Palms Church — site of one of Crossover's larger block parties — in north central Phoenix.

After a vendor ground up bags of ice to make "snow" for the rubber slide, local kids lined up to make the run on plastic sleds. The neighborhood children also enjoyed giant water slides and bounce house attractions.

"It's been a wonderful week for our church," said Charles Lord, pastor of Royal Palms Church. "Many people have come to know the Lord but the block party is not the end of what we are doing, but only the beginning."

Lord says his church runs about 220 in worship and is in the center of a neighborhood with students, suburbanites, and refugees from Africa and the Middle East.

Another highlight of the Royal Palms block party was Christian illusionist Robby Lashua, who did three 30-minute shows, wowing audiences with his jaw-dropping illusions. Only 27, Lashua has been doing illusions for 19 years.

"It's easy to weave the Gospel into my tricks," Lashua says. "I tell the audience that everything I do is a trick that can be explained. I tell them how David Copperfield requires trucks of equipment to do his illusions. Then I compare him to Jesus, who walked around Palestine doing His miracles without the need for trucks or tricks."



Dennis Mohr (right) of First Church in Marion, In., and Jon Potts (center) of First Southern Baptist Church of Avondale, Az., lead two unidentified Arizona residents to the Lord on June 12 after the two men set up water slides for a Crossover 2011 block party at the Church of Arrowhead in Glendale, Az. The evangelistic outreach was one of 70 sponsored by Arizona Southern Baptist Churches prior to the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting June 14-15 at the Phoenix Convention Center. (BP photo)